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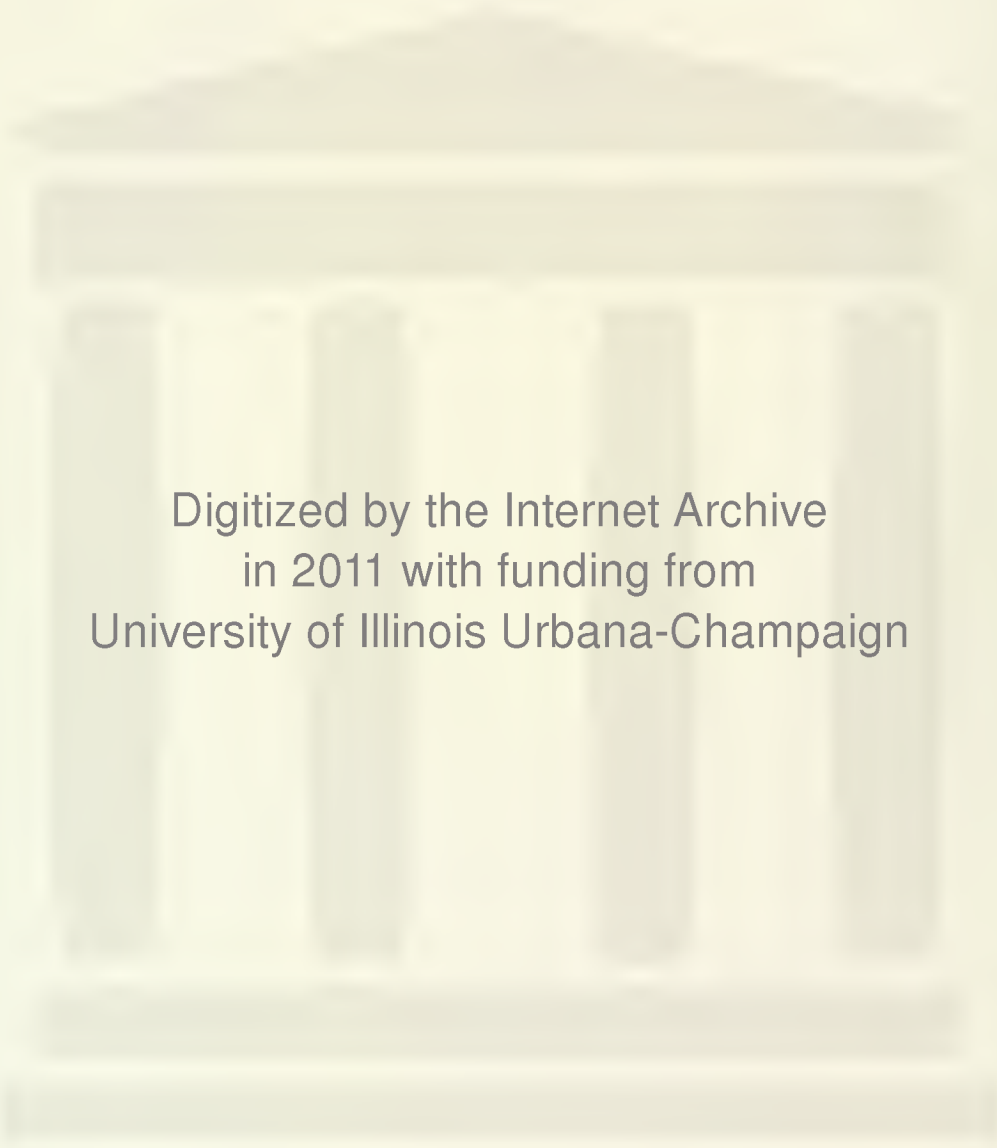
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## **"Power Potential" Channel Strategies in Social Marketing**

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"Power Potential" Channel Strategies  
in Social Marketing

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## ABSTRACT

A neglected area of conceptualization and practical advice in social marketing is the development of strategies for securing middle-man cooperation. An approach based on the concept of power potential evaluation is offered here along with practical examples from recent consulting experience.



## "Power Potential" Channel Strategies in Social Marketing

A significant hallmark of mid-century America is the greatly accelerated growth of institutions which choose to--or are mandated to--bring about what they define as socially desirable attitudes and behaviors. These "social marketers" include such diverse groups as the evangelical Christians, the "New Army," health maintenance organizations, and burgeoning regional performing arts companies. And as the rapidly growing number of seminars, consultancies and articles attests, these institutions have also recently discovered marketing as a potentially powerful tool to help them achieve their objectives (Fox and Kotter 1980).

Perhaps naturally, early infatuation with marketing has focused on its more "glamorous" dimensions. Thus, marketing experts have been called upon to provide advice and assistance on marketing research, on the development of advertising and sales promotion strategies, and on the redesign or redefinition of basic product and service offerings. Yet, these represent only a subset of a well-coordinated marketing mix that ought to include "price" and "place" components as well.

The "price" component is often neglected because it is often quite unclear what the "price" is in a given non-profit marketing transaction, particularly where one is talking about trying to change social attitudes and behaviors. Thus, for example, it would require careful empirical research to determine just what the "price" really is for adopting better preventive health practices or supporting the Equal Rights Amendment. Yet, if part of the problem in social marketing is that significant portions of the target audience are inhibited by barriers to action, then evaluation and correction of these barriers



(i.e., reducing the price) can prove a highly effective marketing tactic. For example, the Office of Career Communications in the National Institutes of Health (OCC) has found that many women fail to practice monthly breast self-examination (BSE) because one "price" they perceive is giving up peace of mind that comes from avoiding BSE. To reduce this "price," OCC seeks to assure women that in case a problem is found, much progress has been made in treating breast cancer.<sup>1</sup>

The "place" component is often underplayed also since it is seen primarily in terms of delivery alternatives which can make the exchanges physically easier for target customers. Thus, examples have included strategies for bringing symphonies to the populace or scheduling blood donation drives during more convenient hours or placing blood pressure testing devices in shopping malls.

#### Middlemen-A Neglected Domain

Yet there is a whole domain of distribution strategy that has not been subjected to systematic investigation and planning. It has received virtually no attention at all in the marketing and non-profit literature. This domain involves the use of various middlemen agencies to carry out important aspects of the social marketing program. It is a cold, hard truth about social marketing that it is substantially underfunded for the size of the tasks it typically faces. It is a necessity, then, that such agencies spend a great deal of their planning time and energies developing strategies to get other organizations to assist in carrying out their programs. For example, to achieve its

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<sup>1</sup>I am indebted to Terry Baugh of Porter, Norelli and Associates for this example.

objective of increasing the number of quitting smokers, the Office of Cancer Communications is attempting to work with and through practicing physicians, pharmacists and dentists who will have the ultimate responsibility for actually trying to change behaviors. In a sense, OCC is acting as a manufacturer and the health professionals are the "retailers" of social marketing "products."

If this is a plausible analogy, clearly social marketing programs could be improved by better understanding and adopting middleman strategies proven successful in the profit sector. To work toward this goal, this article offers (a) a conceptual framework for thinking about the strategy problems involved in securing middleman cooperation and (b) a 9 step procedure based on the key concept of "power potential" for translating the framework into specific strategy choices. A conceptual example drawn from the author's consulting experience is included to illustrate the central points.

## THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

### The Basic Problem

As with any channels problem, the fundamental predicament is that another, separate organization and/or individual with different perceptions, goals, and skills from the social marketer must undertake tasks that will help achieve the latter's goals. It is, however, the basic premise of this paper that the "channels problem" is not in any major way different from the problems involved in marketing to final consumers. That is to say, the problem is one of creating exchanges with target markets, in this case key middlemen. As such, the steps involved in developing an effective middleman marketing strategy are clear:



- 1) Identify all potential middlemen market target segments.
- 2) Evaluate potential segments and select a subset for detailed investigation.
- 3) Identify the basic needs and wants of these target audiences.
- 4) Ascertain current perceptions of the target audiences as to your organization and to the costs and benefits of compliance as well as non-compliance in the proposed exchanges.
- 5) Assemble all possible strategies to increase perceived benefits and/or reduce perceived costs of participation by each target audience to the point where the desired number and types of exchanges can be created.
- 6) Evaluate the likely costs and payoffs of each strategy and select for the given planning period those that will jointly maximize the number of exchanges initiated and minimize the cost of obtaining them to the social marketing organization.
- 7) Determine optimal strategies for maintaining the desired relationships.

Implicit in this approach are a number of marketing principles:

1. The best marketing strategy begins with the (middleman) customer rather than the organization.
2. It is the target customer's needs, wants and perceptions that will be crucial to success not those of the organization.
3. Since these needs, wants and perceptions are subjective phenomena, the marketer cannot know them and so must engage in some form of formal or informal research (even if only personal speculation) to ascertain them.

4. The number of exchanges will be increased if and only if the cost/benefit ratios perceived by selected middlemen target audiences are changed in a favorable direction.
5. Since change in cost/benefit ratios is crucial, the key research issue is: how will target audience perceptions change as a result of alternative marketing strategy choices?
6. Strategies must be developed not only (a) to create first time trials among present non-participating middlemen but also (b) to ensure continued usage by trial participants and/or (c) to increase usage by present or trial participants.
7. Finally, the selection of optimum short and long run strategies is not merely a matter of increasing effectiveness in creating exchanges but must also consider the costs to the organization of creating them (the efficiency issue).

#### The Place of Power

Some channel strategies may be focused only on one-time trials. Examples would include programs to get middlemen to secure donations to a specific university endowment fund, the putting up of posters or distribution of brochures for a given charity event, or conduct a specific educational/persuasion seminar for an organization's employees. More frequently, however, social marketers will be--or ought to be--striving to secure some kind of continuing cooperation--that is, repeated exchanges beyond the "trial" period.

How can these be established? The "channels literature" in marketing in the main has considered the relationships between interinstitutional power and organizational roles as the key elements in bringing

about long run cooperation (e.g., El-Ansary 1975; El-Ansary and Stern 1972). As suggested above, these relationships, in turn, must be explicitly linked to cost/benefit concepts of exchange theory. For practicing managers, this latter linkage is essential if the approaches are to be useful. We shall attempt to construct that linkage here.

### Costs, Benefits, Power and Roles

It has been pointed out in a historically growing body of writings by Emerson [1962], Thompson [1967] and Hickson et al [1971] that the long term role an individual or organization adopts in a channel relationship is closely related to the type of influence exerted by the organization or individual that is trying to create the relationship. In this relationship the target channel member may assume an independent or a dependent relationship with respect to the marketer. Dependency is the inverse of influence. A dependent role indicates that influence implicitly or explicitly has been exerted; an independent role indicates that it has not. Influence, in turn, is a function of power (but is not synonymous with it). Power, in this sense, is a basis for influence. The power may never have to be used to be real. For example, a franchise agreement would never have to be revoked to demonstrate its power.

Herbert Kelman [1961] has suggested that for influence to work, one of three types of responses on the part of the target must have occurred: internalization, identification or compliance.

Internalization occurs if the target comes to believe that participation in the relationship will meet his/her/its short or long term needs and wants. This does not mean that all of the outcomes of the

program as perceived by the marketer need be beneficial to the influencee, only some subset. Participation that comes about due to an internalization response, will result in the target audience voluntarily cooperating in the program thus adopting an independent role. The middleman presumably would identify the locus of control of the decision to participate as internal. These relationships are shown graphically in Figure 1.

See Figure 1

Identification on the other hand means that the influencee decides to participate because merely being associated with the program and/or its sponsors provides a benefit that makes the benefit/cost ratio sufficiently high to recommend participation. This response is, in one sense, therefore dependent in that by definition the benefit is only available from the given marketer and would normally require his agreement to let the middleman participate. It is not clear in this case, however, whether the target middleman would attribute locus of control over the decision as internal or external. To be external, control would be attributed to those other than the marketer (e.g., society, peers, other reference groups) who are seen as defining the amount of prestige flowing from participation. On the other hand, an internal attribution would be made where the middlemen determined that the decision to identify was theirs. It is assumed that an identification relationship is less stable than an internalized relationship in the long run in that its persistence depends on the middleman's perceptions of the enhancing power to him of identification with the program and its sponsors.

The third type of relationship, compliance with an attempt at influence, comes about if the target middleman responds to a direct inducement offered to him by the social marketer. This inducement can be positive (a benefit) in the case of monetary payoffs, or offers of advice and other assistance or negative (a cost) in the case of punishments or threats. Here, the middleman is de facto in a dependent role and would presumably attribute locus of control as external and associate it with the specific marketer.

#### Strategies for Involving Middlemen

The ability to make the middleman dependent on the marketer to some greater or lesser degree is an indication that influence has been exerted. The influence potential as noted earlier, rests on some form of power. French and Raven [1959] have identified seven sources of such power. Each is a perceived source of power. As noted, to be effective it never need actually be exerted nor even mentioned (a Mafioso loan enforcer need never really break any arms or legs or even suggest he might to achieve a 100% repayment rate). Examples of each type of power in social marketing are the following.

1. The ability to offer rewards (Reward Power). The Public Broadcasting System can allow corporate sponsors of PBS programming to present "commercials" at the beginning and end of prestigious productions. Weight Watchers and Alcoholics Anonymous can permit successful dieters or abstainers to brag about their accomplishments in public. Federal agencies secure cooperation by local counterparts by suggesting that future contracts/grants will be funded or refunded. Charities can provide considerable



favorable publicity to cooperating businesses and other organizations.

2. The ability to impose punishments (Coercive Power). Both public and private universities can be threatened with loss of federal grants if they do not meet Department of Education guidelines as to minority and female hiring. Corporations continuing to pollute the air or water can be threatened by governmental and private groups with significant adverse publicity as to their "anti-societal" actions (or inactions).
3. The ability to legally require desired behaviors (Legal Legitimate Power). Government contracts can impose requirements of non-discriminatory behavior on the part of contractors. Contracts for various social change programs can require specific performance, including, for example, evaluation studies at their conclusion (marketing research or a marketing audit).
4. The socially accepted (but not yet legal) ability to require desired behaviors (Traditional Legitimate Power). Although volunteer workers are not contractually bound to the organizations they serve, the latter can dictate dress codes, sales presentations and sometimes timing and place of work. Contractors in government programs may not be required to permit inspection of their programs, but aspects of those programs not involving "trade secrets" are generally considered open to funders' observations, even participation. Corporations in these times can be made to feel that local, and/or state officials by virtue of permitting operations in a given community



have the "right" to dictate certain socially responsible behaviors (e.g., specific kinds of waste treatment, job training and so forth).

5. The ability to provide expert assistance or guidance (Expert Power). Local chapters of voluntary agencies such as the United Way or the Republican Party can be made to acquiesce to marketing recommendations of their national organizations because of the latter's presumed greater sophistication. Research contractors new to a topic area can be encouraged to permit heavy editorial guidance for reports aimed at unfamiliar target audiences.
6. The ability to offer association with a prestigious program and/or institution (Referent Power). Presumably many liquor manufacturers and beer distributors offer goods and services and/or funding for charitable events because of the presumed elevation in status this will provide. Assistant Professors or commercial researchers may agree to carry out specific methodologies because they wish to include work for a prestigious sponsor on their resume or in their organizational brochures.
7. The ability to offer information that will help the target middlemen achieve their goals (Informational Power). This differs from expert assistance in that no superiority in skills is implied. Thus, the Office of Cancer Communications can offer participating physicians informational kits containing anti-smoking office posters, pamphlets to give to patients who wish

to quit and so on. Various public service agencies can provide cooperating television stations with commercials, announcements, speakers and/or educational films that will help the stations meet their requirement to devote a given percent of their weekly air time to so-called Public Service Announcements (PSA's) and to public service programming.

Kasulis and Spekman [1980] have proposed that these seven different types of power can be grouped according to the different responses they will typically achieve from channel members:

- a. Reward, coercive and legal legitimate power will be associated with compliance;
- b. Referent and expert power will be associated with identification; and
- c. Traditional legitimate and informational power will be associated with internalization.

Furthermore, within the "compliance" group they suggest that coercive power will yield the lowest level of long run compliance since this relationship often fosters conflict within the channel. On the other hand, legal legitimate power is seen as the most effective in this group since the latter may come to be to some degree internalized. By the same token, within the "identification" group, referent power will be less effective than expert power in achieving long run identification in part because the former is subject to the vagaries of peer and public opinion, which is to some degree outside the control of the marketer. Finally, they suggest that in the last group, traditional legitimate power will be less effective than informational power in achieving

internalization since the latter, by definition, means that participation in the marketer's program fits closely with the middleman's goals.

## DEVELOPING MIDDLEMEN STRATEGIES

### Strategy Alternatives

The problem for the social marketer is to choose influence strategies to try to secure middlemen participation in particular programs. It is the central argument here that such a choice should be based on an analysis of the marketer's power bases. It is a problem not unlike that faced in salesmen motivation (Busch 1980). While the choice will often yield a mixed strategy, the options can be grouped into three broad strategic categories. These categories could be described as follows:

1. Requiring middleman cooperation through the use of coercive, traditional legitimate and legal legitimate power.
2. Rewarding middlemen cooperation through the manipulation of reward or referent power.
3. Persuading middlemen to cooperate through the use of expert and informational power. (Although persuasion, in a sense, is implicit in all of these alternatives.)

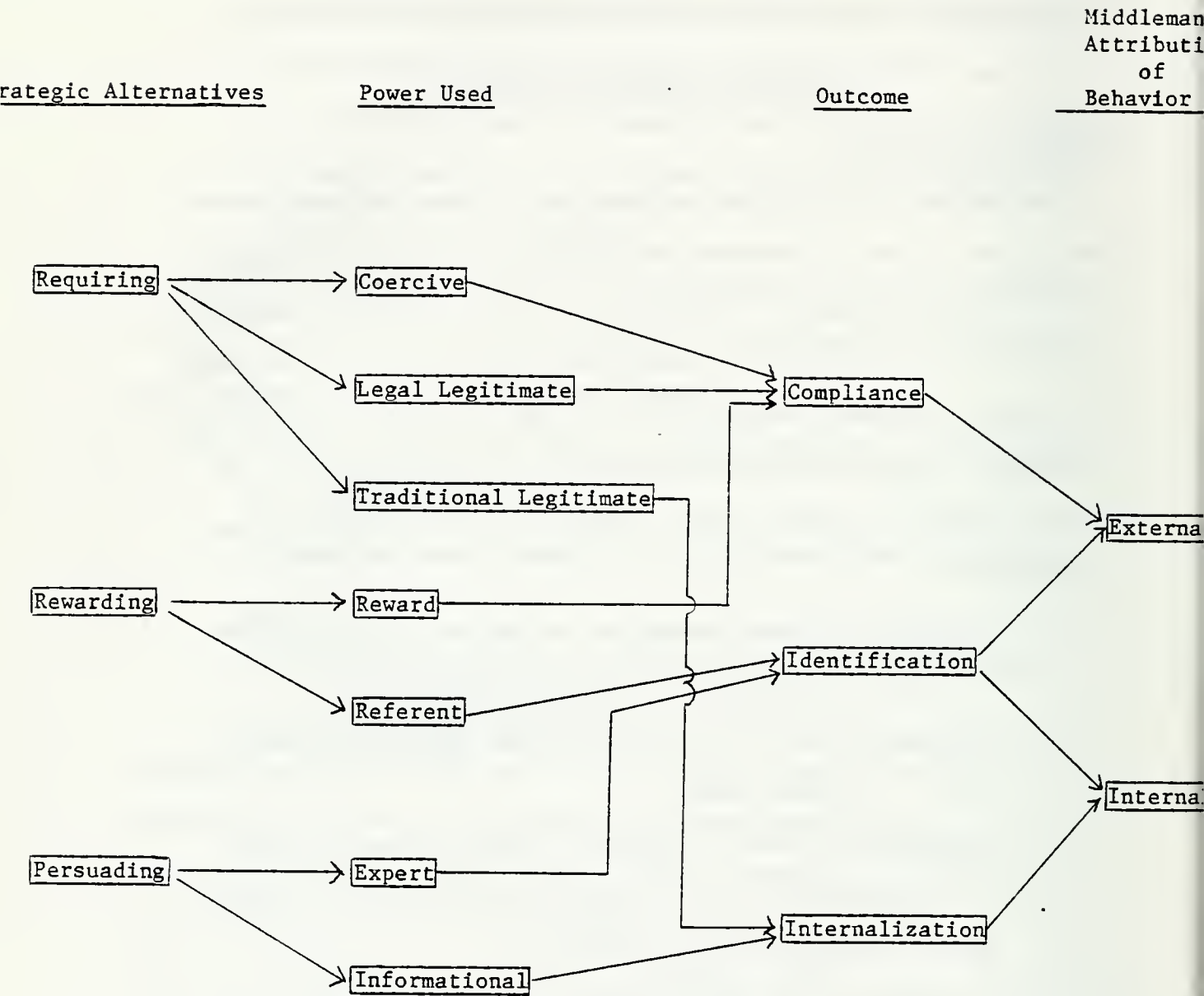
An outline of these strategy alternatives is given in Figure 1.

### The "Power Potential" Approach

It will be recalled that the key to channel strategy was to see the problem as one of creating exchanges with target middlemen markets and that such exchanges would be effected if and only if the target markets perceived that the benefit/cost ratio was sufficiently positive to

Figure 1

Channel Strategy Possibilities for Social Marketers



encourage risking a first time or continued participation in the social marketing program. The steps involved utilizing the concepts in Figure 1 are the following:

1. Identify all possible target audiences on which the marketer may be able to exert influence using one or more of the seven kinds of power base.
2. Ascertain perceptions of your organization and the specific costs and benefits of participating in your social marketing program. To permit effective use of whatever power leverage is available to you, answers to the following questions must be obtained to ascertain your power potential:
  - a. Do target audiences perceive you as able to inflict any kinds of "punishment" on them? Can you withhold vital resources, add to their costs of operation, or bring about unfavorable publicity if they do not participate? If so, how serious are these potential costs perceived to be by target audiences? This would assess coercive power potential.
  - b. Are there direct rewards that the social marketer can offer the middleman for participation? Does the middleman perceive that the social marketer can offer favorable publicity? Will there be significant funding directly available or for the middleman or can participation allow them to seek grants elsewhere (e.g., CETA funds) and, if so, (i) are target audiences aware of this and (ii) how highly do they value these potential benefits? This would assess reward power potential.



- c. Do target audiences perceive that you have a legal or socially supported right to require participation in the proposed programs, thereby assessing traditional and legal power potentials.
  - d. Is the social marketer and/or their programs perceived to have high prestige? What is the nature of this prestige and how can it be enhanced? If prestige is high, how valuable do target audience members perceive association with these programs to be? This assesses referent power potential.
  - e. Similarly, is your organization perceived to have special competences and, if so, how much are target audience members willing to rely on this expertise? (Expert power potential.)
  - f. What assistance can the social marketer provide in the way of information, products, or services that can be potentially helpful to target audiences in meeting their objectives and how great are these benefits perceived to be? (Informational power potential.)
- 3. Assemble an array of possible influence strategies to implement the power potentials discovered in step 2.
  - 4. Evaluate in detail the likely effectiveness and efficiency of each strategy for each target audience.
  - 5. Select the optimum combination of influence strategies within and across audiences that will secure initial participation in the program by middlemen not now involved.
  - 6. Select the optimum combination of power strategies that will maintain and increase participation by middlemen already involved in the program.



7. Develop detailed tactics implementing the selected strategies.
8. Implement programs where possible systematically testing competing alternatives.
9. Measure performance and adjust strategies and tactics with experience.

#### A CONCRETE EXAMPLE

Suppose a marketer such as the Office of Cancer Communications at the National Institutes of Health (OCC) is considering two new alternative middlemen to further their programs to get more individuals to quit smoking. The two alternatives are member unions in a specific AFL-CIO union and registered and practical nurses working in hospitals. Assume further that because of the Office's resource constraints--primarily funds and manpower--only one of these middlemen will be recruited. How does the above framework suggest one proceed?

Obviously, a first consideration is whether nurses or union representatives would be more effective as "retailers" of OCC programs. Assuming for the moment that the two are adjudged equally effective, the next step is to develop an array of possible influence strategies based on each kind of power directed at each target group. Such a set of influence strategies could include the following.

#### An AFL-CIO Union

##### a. Coercive Power

1. Threaten to take program to rival unions and/or to company management.
2. Promote the program directly to union members telling them to ask their union to participate.

b. Reward Power

1. Offer to publicize the union's cooperation to general public--improving unions' public image.
2. Conduct contests with rewards for union representative securing the most quitting smokers.
3. Offer exclusive "rights" to program participation.

c. Legal Legitimate Power

1. Require federally funded training programs conducted by unions in high risk occupations to have an anti-smoking module.

d. Traditional Legitimate Power

1. None.

e. Referent Power

1. Show that participation in the OCC program would permit union to tell members that the union is concerned about their health and is working with a leader in the health care field to that end.

f. Expert Power

1. Show that OCC/NIH is an expert in smoking behavior change tools and techniques and offer to provide this expertise as part of participation.
2. Differentiate OCC/NIH by showing that its skills, programs, etc. are superior to rivals (e.g., American Cancer Society).
3. Offer assistance in setting up demonstration projects.

g. Informational Power

1. Show how smoking reduction can lengthen lives of union members especially in high risk occupations and therefore prolong their participation in the union.
2. Show how anti-smoking propaganda and training should be part of any unions' preventive health care benefits for its members.
3. Show how participation in a smoking cessation program can help an individual union compete with a rival in representation fights.
4. Produce sample first quality brochures, films, posters specifically for unions to use with their members. Emphasize unions' care for members' welfare in the brochures.
5. Provide unions with free literature that can be locally tagged to enhance union identification with a "socially good" program.

## Hospital Nurses

- a. Coercive Power
  1. Point to high smoking rates among nurses as compared to MD's and suggest that they have a special responsibility to themselves and their patients to promote quitting.
  2. Promote the program directly to patients telling them to ask their "health professionals" for more information.
- b. Reward Power
  1. Publicize nurses contributions to the general public and to other health professionals.
  2. Offer specially framed certificates to individual nurses for participation.
  3. Conduct contests with rewards for nurses securing most quitting smokers.
  4. Fund demonstration projects with extra pay for nurses helping in the program.
- c. Legal and Legitimate Power
  1. Require education in behavior change techniques to be part of nursing licensing requirements.
- d. Traditional Legitimate Power
  1. Tell nurses that it is part of their professional obligation to get people to quit smoking.
- e. Referent Power
  1. Create a crusade-like atmosphere where all health professionals (including MD's, pharmacists, dentists, and nurses) are working together on a major health problem.
  2. Offer to write letters to each nurses' employers commending their cooperation with a federal health effort.
  3. Position the program as a research effort in which the nurses can help advance the frontiers of preventive health care.
- f. Expert Power
  1. Show that OCC/NIH is an expert in smoking behavior change tools and techniques and offer to provide this expertise as part of participation.
  2. Differentiate OCC/NIH by showing that its skills, programs, etc. are superior to rivals.

g. Informational Power

1. Show how encouraging patients to quite smoking is an expected part of a total patient care role.
2. Show how learning anti-smoking behavior change techniques will be useful training for the nurse which can be generalizable to other behavior change situations (e.g., getting patients to take medicine, diet, exercise, etc.).
3. Produce sample first quality brochures, films, posters for patient education with nurses cooperation prominently portrayed.

The next step would be to conduct discussions with knowledgeable observers inside and outside each target group to (a) eliminate obviously ineffective or overly costly strategies; (b) add additional strategies and/or details of implementation; and (c) begin to calibrate the likely costs and effectiveness of each surviving alternative. The third step would then involve more precise estimates of costs and effectiveness of the most promising strategies. This step might well require field interviewing of samples of target audience members.

The next steps obviously would require selection of a target audience and a set of influence strategies for implementation followed by implementation and control.

It is not the purpose of this paper to conclude which market is the better target or to recommend specific influence strategies. Nurses appear to show the most promise as middlemen since more influence strategies seem to be available to work with in recruiting them. Further, since OCC's experience with other health professionals could be used to evaluate the various alternatives, choices among future strategies and tactics ought to be relatively easier than for the union target market. Whatever the final outcome, we are at least suggesting here the precise procedure that OCC and organizations like it ought to adopt in developing these particular middlemen options.

## OTHER USEFUL CHANNELS CONCEPTS

In addition to the Power Potential Evaluation procedure there are several other concepts used in channel strategy literature in the private sector that can be introduced to enhance the effectiveness and/or improve the efficiency of a social marketers' use of power in middlemen marketing programs.

### Push vs. Pull Strategies

In the private sector, a fundamental choice a marketer must make is whether to push the product through the channel by offering clear rationales as to why the middlemen should cooperate. Reward and informational power are the principal incentives used in push strategies where the objective is to rely on a well-motivated middleman to bring the product or service to the consumer market's attention. The alternative approach--the pull strategy--circumvents the middleman, promoting the product or service directly to consumers. The consumers, in turn, by their demands bring pressure to bear on the middleman to make the product or service available. This strategy is in effect an example of the use of one type of coercive power. It has been used by OCC which has been advertising the breast cancer program in consumer and specialty publications to encourage use of the program.

In the social marketing area, government publicity of the HMO (Health Maintenance Organization) concept has in many communities brought "pull pressure" to bear on local hospitals, clinics, employers and unions to make such an option available. United Way also puts pressure on employers to permit payroll deduction for United Way. However push strategies appear to be the preferred strategic choice of



most social marketers, such as OCC, the American Cancer Society, and the Heart Association to motivate local middlemen--physicians, volunteers, TV stations--to help carry out the program. While this choice is obviously dictated by the costliness of a pull strategy, it is the author's opinion that the latter is too seldom explored for at least a minor role in strategic planning.

### Exclusivity of Dealerships

Private sector marketers must decide how extensively their product or service is to be made available. One option considered is mass distribution, seeking to make the product or service available virtually everywhere in part to increase consumer exposure and in part to minimize consumer inconvenience in obtaining a product or service which they would ignore or avoid were it not close at hand. At the other extreme is exclusive distribution where only one outlet carries the product or service. This option is often chosen if it will increase the motivation of the channel member to offer and/or promote the product or service since exclusivity may increase prestige (referent power; "the only store in town that carries Steuben Glass") and/or insure that the benefits of any marketing program adhere only to the exclusive dealer (reward power). The exclusivity option is, however, only desirable if either (a) target consumers are the typical patrons of the middleman or (b) target customers will be willing to put out considerable effort and forbear considerable inconvenience to obtain the product.

A final, intermediate strategy is termed selective distribution where more than one but fewer than all outlets are chosen as middlemen.



It has some of the motivating properties of exclusivity while reducing inconvenience to final consumers. In social marketing, United Way has something of a mass distribution strategy for its funds solicitations; the Red Cross collects blood only at selected sites and many performing artists only give one or two exclusive engagements around the country in a given year. By contrast, OCC makes a point of restricting distribution of the Breast Cancer Digest to health professionals. It is the author's experience, however, that many organizations do not systematically evaluate these alternatives. They appear to implicitly adopt a mass distribution orientation, willing to take on anyone "who will have them." The possibilities of enhancing the social marketer's reward or referent power through consciously restricted distribution is most often considered.

#### Central vs. Local Administration

A key question in channel management is how much discretion should the intermediary be allowed to adjust the marketing strategy to local conditions. The options, of course, range from tight central control to abandonment of control to the intermediary. Central control will be preferred if (a) close coordination of programs across areas is desirable; (b) local intermediaries lack necessary skills or market insights; and/or (c) local conditions do not vary significantly. Central control will be possible to the extent that marketer possesses the power potentials outlined in Figure 1. It is, however, the feeling of many social marketers that since most middlemen are cooperating "as a favor" control is hard to exert once materials are in the middleman's

hands. The problem then is to design materials so that they are hard to tamper with.

### Opinion Leadership

Where an ultimate goal involves rather broad participation by different middlemen in a given program, an important question is which middlemen should be pursued early in the program and which later. The literature on opinion leadership suggests strongly that early choices should be intermediaries who in turn either will directly recruit other intermediaries through what Katz and Lazarsfeld have called "the two-step flow of communication" [Katz and Lazarsfeld, 1957] or will serve as exemplars in persuasive strategies the social marketer can aim at laggard intermediaries in later stages of program strategy.

Seeking out opinion leaders in the early stages of a strategy and devoting considerable resources to attracting them is, of course, an excellent method for economizing on the extremely limited budgets typical of social marketing organizations. The principal problem then becomes one of identifying opinion leaders. Fortunately, within more-or-less circumscribed markets such as AFL-CIO unions or hospital nurses, informal discussions with knowledgeable participants often clearly identifies particular intermediaries who are (a) likely to be innovative in developing new programs in the given subject area and (b) likely to be sought out by others for direct advice or as a model for emulation. Where such opinion-leading intermediaries do not easily present themselves, the social marketer may also consider creating them.

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